'Golden Eagle' makes good holiday gift

Looking for a suitable Christmas gift for someone who likes history or the out-of-doors?

The 1984 Department of Interior "Golden Eagle Passport," the annual entrance permit for the national parks, is now on sale at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, superintendent Jon B. Montgomery announced.

Entrance fees range from 50 cents per person to $3.00 per car. (The remainder of the 334 parks in the National Park System are open free to the public although they may charge user fees for the use of facilities or special equipment.)

Golden Eagle Passports admit the permit holder any accompanying passengers in a single, private noncommercial vehicle. Where entry is not by private vehicle, the passport allows entrance by the holder, spouse, children and parents. The Golden Eagle may be used throughout calendar year 1984.

Montgomery pointed out that the $10 cost of the Golden Eagle Passport has remained the same for 10 years although the fee charged for daily use of Park Service Campgrounds has been raised.

U.S. Citizens who are 62 years of age or older, or who are disabled, need not purchase a Golden Eagle Passport. Instead, those 62 or older are eligible to apply for a free lifetime entrance permit to the parks, the "Golden Age Passport." Those who are permanently disabled or blind may apply for a free lifetime entrance permit. These two must be obtained in person at the park by showing valid documentation.

The Golden Eagle Passport may be purchased either in person or by mail from the nearest National Park Service regional office or at the first national park you arrive at on vacation.

To get your Golden Eagle by mail, send your personal check or money order to the Office of Public Affairs, 143 S. Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, with a note or letter requesting a 1984 Golden Eagle Passport and giving your name and address. No application form is required.

To obtain it in person, inquire at the visitor center information desk.

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Happiness is 4-H

By FRANK H. SWEET
Extension Agent

Congratulations to each of the 4-H young people who participated in last week's county 4-H Share-the-Fun Show. Each 4-H'er who took part in the program was surely a winner in providing entertainment for their audience. Top winners in the various Share-the-Fun categories will have the opportunity to go on to further competition in the spring. A special thanks to American Federal Savings and Loan for their sponsorship of the Share-the-Fun program.

Many of the 4-H Share-the-Fun acts would be excellent for providing special entertainment for community groups or civic clubs. If your group would like to have several 4-H talent acts for a special program, give us a call at the Appomattox Extension Office.

* * *

The 4-H Achievement Record Workshops will be held on December 22, December 27 and December 29 in the Appomattox Extension Office. Workshops will be held on the above days in the mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and in the afternoon from 1 to 4. All Senior 4-H'ers are invited along with those members in the 7th and 8th grades who are interested in working on achievement records. 4-H achievement records provide the only way for a member to win a trip to National 4-H Congress or a National 4-H scholarship.

* * *

4-H Public Speaking will be the next major 4-H program for Appomattox 4-H'ers. Members will learn about opportunities in Public Speaking at their January meetings with actual contests beginning in late January. Sponsorship for 4-H Public Speaking is provided by Farmers National Bank.

* * *

The Christmas holidays are an excellent time for 4-Hers to work on their individual 4-H projects. In many cases, family members can provide excellent assistance to young people working on projects. Parents can encourage youngsters who argue, "I'm bored," or "I don't have anything to do," by suggesting that they work on their 4-H projects. Project work is extremely important to each 4-H member.

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Appomattox Hdwe Co., Inc.

Let's Dance!

Longwood professor changes the image of an art form

By BETTY BRYANT

More than 6,000 children in Virginia have changed their minds about what dance is.

The children have been exposed to Nelson Neal, and they no longer think dance is "dumb" or "sissy."

During the past year, Neal has conducted his "Dance Is . . ." workshops in 17 different schools around the state. He received a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts to help finance the program.

"The end result was that some learning took place," Neal said. The children learned about dance and Neal learned about the children's attitudes toward dance.

Neal is assistant professor of health and physical education at Longwood College and co-director of the Longwood Company of Dancers. A graduate of the State University of New York at Cortland, he received the master's degree in dance form the University of Wisconsin. He is presently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Virginia; his major area of study is motor learning, with supporting studies in modern dance and television production.

He taught dance and physical education classes and coached wrestling at the University of Mississippi for five years before joining Longwood's faculty in 1978.

As part of the "Dance Is . . ." program, Neal conducted an attitude study. He wanted to answer two questions: Do boys have a different attitude about dance than girls, and can the attitudes of fourth graders about dance be changed to more positive ones?

He developed a "modern dance attitude questionnaire." Some of the questions included in the survey came from fourth graders at Appomattox and Prince Edward County Elementary Schools who wrote letters to Neal after they participated in his workshop.

"I used some of their comments to formulate questions," Neal said. "Probably a dozen or more of them said something like 'I thought dance was dumb, but I discovered I really like it'."

About a week before he was scheduled to conduct each dance workshop, Neal asked the fourth-grade participants to answer his dance attitude questionnaire. Immediately after the workshop, the children answered the questons again, and once more a week later.

"When they took the questionnaire before the workshop, many of the children had no idea what modern dance was," Neal said. "They were guessing at what I was taking about. They made comments like 'that's sissy' and 'the male dancer just walks around wearing those tight things on his legs, and sometimes he turns the girl dancer or lifts her up'."

Responses to the before-the-workshop questionnaire also revealed the child's "social evaluation of dance," Neal said. "It showed where dance ranks on the child's hierarchy of activities, as compared to football, for instance. Maybe something the child has done in physical educaiton classes, or something on TV, or the parents' attitudes have influenced him to think that dance isn't the thing to do."

Through his workshops, Neal introduced the children to modern dance, jazz dance, and sports dance. Modern dance, he says, is "a technique, a way of moving the body." Sometimes called creative or interpretive dance, it was an offshoot of ballet.

"In the early 1900s, dancers got out of ballet shoes and the stiff tutu," Neal said. "They began to dance barefoot and wore loose, flowing costumes. This technique of dancing was 'modern' in the 1900-1910 period, and they have never come up with a better name for it."

Jazz dance is a style, built on a variety of techniques of dancing. Neal explains: "Jazz dance has taken styles from various cultures and periods and put them into the modern dance frame. Early jazz style comes from African movements. Jazz also has movements from the Charleston, swing, and litterbug dances."

Sports dance is, simply, modern dance based on movements found in sports activities. "A discus thrower, for example, twists his body before he spins and throws the discus," Neal said. "Sports dance takes the twisting and pirouette motions and changes them slightly so that they are dance motions. The aim is not to throw the discus as far as possible. The aim become show you perform the movement – how it feels and how it looks."

His workshop programs usually were two-part. First, there were the creative movement sessions for the children. They participated in activities like "soundance" (imitate a piece of frying bacon) or portrayed emotions (freeze in an angry shape). Then Neal gave a performance, sometimes joined by members of the Longwood Dance Company.

After analyzing his attitude study data, Neal found there were no real surprises. "What I discovered was that girls have a more positive attitude toward modern dance than boys do."

But, more importantly, he found that "most boys and girls who begin with a negative attitude about modern dance significantly improve their attitude toward the positive after participation in the modern dance workshop."

[Continued on Page B-6]

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